

VPP: Columbia Vista Corporation - Vancouver achieves top recognition

Columbia Vista Corporation in Vancouver achieves top recognition for occupational safety & health as Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) STAR.

The Columbia Vista Corporation Vancouver Sawmill and Dry Kilns produces high-quality green and kiln-dried Douglas Fir products which are distributed nationally and abroad. The sawmill is located on approximately fourteen acres off of state Highway 14 (Evergreen Highway) bordered by the Columbia River. The dry kilns and remanufacturing facility is located approximately eight miles to the west of downtown Vancouver on eleven acres east of Fruit Valley Road.

On September 1, 2005, the Vancouver site celebrated achieving the prestigious VPP STAR status with an award ceremony.



Pictured in Photo (from left to right) Sitting - Royce Pollard - Standing - Bob Lewis receiving the VPP STAR plaque from Mel James.

Bob Lewis, President of Columbia Vista Corporation, was the MC for the ceremony and spoke on the achievement of this monumental award. Mr. Lewis welcomed Royce Pollard, Mayor of Vancouver; State Representatives Bill Fromhold, Jim Moeller, Jim Dunn; City of Vancouver personnel Gerald Baugh, Downtown Business Development Manager, Brian Carlson, Public Works Manager, David Scott, Development Review Manager; Rodger Glos from the Timber Operators Council (TOC); Mike O'Halloran from the Western Wood Products Association (WWPA) and Mel James, Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) Acting Senior Program Manager.

"We are pleased that Columbia Vista Corporation is committed to holding themselves accountable for making the workplace safe for all of their employees," said Mayor Royce Pollard. "They believe that every incident is preventable and work hard to incorporate safety practices with that in mind." Mayor Pollard also recognized Columbia Vista for its contributions and commitment to environmental issues.

Mel James addressed the audience on the company's management commitment and employee involvement required to achieve a quality safety and health program. In addition, James presented the VPP plaque to Mr. Lewis and the VPP flag to the site's Safety Committee. VPP status is approved by WISHA Services for worksite applicants who have achieved outstanding safety and health programs. Only 1,345 sites nationally have achieved this elite VPP status. Columbia Vista Corporation was approved as a VPP STAR site on August 9, 2005 and is WISHA's twenty-first STAR site.



Mel James, WISHA Services, Acting Senior Program Manager along with representatives from WISHA, presented the prestigious VPP status flag to the Columbia Vista Corporation Safety Committee members.

Pictured in Photo (from left to right: Jason Kent, Ken Werenko, Jason James, Lynda Stoneberg, Terry Haight, Trinidad Velasquez, Jeff Gruber, John Geppert, Ted Faulk, Dayne Waldkirch.)

The worksite's potential hazards associated with lumber production processes include machinery with moving parts; electrical and thermal energy; material handling; ergonomics; walking/working surfaces; confined spaces; high noise levels; falls; and hazardous chemicals. In spite of these hazards, the site's three-year average injury/illness recordable rate for 2002-2004 is 11% below the national average for similar industries and 9% below the national average for days away, restricted, or transferred.

Columbia Vista Corporation, which employs 83 workers, earned its VPP STAR through commitment, leadership, and extensive employee participation in developing a continuously improving safety and health program. The site applied for VPP STAR status and received an on-site review by a team of four WISHA safety and health professionals in June 2005. The site maintains their status by conducting annual self-evaluations on their safety and health programs and will receive a comprehensive onsite review every three years by WISHA staff.



Picture: Royce Pollard, Mayor of Vancouver addressing the audience.

WISHA's review team observed that management and employees are committed to continuous improvements of the site's safety and health program. The safety and health program provides excellent protection from the potential hazards at this worksite.

For more information, contact Jason Kent, Safety Manager for the Columbia Vista Corporation Vancouver site at 360-892-0770, Ext 114. For more information about WISHA's Voluntary Protection Program, in which WISHA and Washington companies work together to improve safety and health programs, call WISHA, [Kenneth Werenko](#), Safety and Health VPP Specialist, 360-902-5515.